which I have heard classics masters attribute to Robert Graves although it is surely much older. It states (in various ways according to the the telling) that a monumental example of getting things backward would be to pile Ossa upon Pelion. The reason for the use of this reversal is evident from my preceding text. In Greek mythology, the giants Ephialtes and Otus made war on the gods and attempted an assault by piling Mt. Pelion on Mt. Ossa; more precisely "they strove to pile Ossa on Olympus, and on Ossa Pelion with the trembing forest leaves, that there might be a pathway to the sky" (*Odyssey*, XI, Butcher and Lang translation).

Page 281: "Drury died in 1803." Authors have disagreed on the year of Drury's death, some choosing a date in 1804. My source is the obituary in *Gentleman's Mag.* **84**, part 1 (January 1804), 86, which unequivocally states that Drury died on 15 December 1803. – RONALD S. WILKINSON, 228 Ninth Street N. E. Washington, D.C. 20002, U.S.A.

ABERRATIONS OF THE HEATH FRITILLARY (MELLICTA ATHALIA ROTT.) IN CORNWALL 1984 –During the flight period of the heath fritillary in June 1984 I spent four days of a Cornish holiday studying and photographing this species. Two adjacent localities were surveyed, the first yielding only four individuals plus a pair dead in a spider's web. The second, more sheltered locality was more rewarding with *athalia* the most numerous butterfly.

For obvious reasons I will not name the site, but would like to place on record my sightings of two aberrations of this butterfly. They were both encountered on 25 June, a very warm day (*ca.* 74°F) with continuous sunshine, albeit windy on exposed areas. Most species were found in the woodland rides and the majority of both sexes, including aberrations, were fresh.

Referring to the work *"Aberrations of British Butterflies"* by A.D.A. Russwurm, the more aberrant of the two was quite clearly a female of the ab. *cymothoe* Bertolini. The forewings had only the marginal tawny markings left unobscured, the hindwings being practically similar to those of a typical female. This was the only difference to Russwurm's plates as far as I can tell, for the underside forewings displayed the *cymothoe* radiated discoidal markings. For a moment when the butterfly first settled open-winged in front of me, I thought I had somehow miraculously come across a mountain ringlet (*Erebia epiphron* Knoch)!

The second aberration was unusual but not as striking. It was a male, totally typical except for the left upperside hindwing which was coloured of a paler hue, representative of the female's lighter ground colour. The size of the markings were however constant on all four wings. Even though a less striking aberration than *cymothoe* the butterfly stood out in the sunshine as he imbibed the bramble nectar.

Both these aberrations and many of the typical forms were sucessfully captured on slide film to remind me of my first visit to the quarters of our rarest resident butterfly. P. BOWLER, 9 Bakers Hill, Heage, Derbyshire DE5 2BL.

FACTORS LEADING TO A LOCAL ABUNDANCE OF EURODRYAS AURINIA ROTTEMBURG (MARSH FRITILLARY) IN WORCESTERSHIRE IN 1984 — In April 1984 larvae of *Eurodryas aurinia*, were so abundant at the only known breeding site in Worcestershire that it was impossible to walk along some of the rides in the private woodland without treading on them. The first butterflies were seen as early as May 14th. and subsequently they were in profusion. It is worth reviewing the factors which have led to this most pleasing situation, especially because, as far as I can ascertain, *aurinia* is still absent from all surrounding counties except Gloucestershire.

I reported (*Ent. Rec.* **89**: 331) the re-appearance of this species in Worcestershire in 1976 after an apparent absence of 23 years. Studies during the poor summers of 1977 and 1978 showed that the colony was weak, only breeding very locally despite an abundance of *Succisa pratensis* (devil's bit scabious). 1979 saw an improvement, but with news of a planned clear felling of a large area followed by installation of deep drainage prior to replanting with conifers, it was decided to establish a captive stock. I sent some larvae to Dr. Keith Porter at Oxford University for determination of parasites, but surprisingly there were none, and subsequently he returned them all as pupae which hatched out without any losses. Work in the woods with heavy machinery devastated the observed breeding areas, so in 1980 the bred stock was released in what appeared to be the best adjacent area.

The winter of 1981 was unfavourably mild and wet, followed by a cool spring, and the first butterflies did not appear until 6th. June. However, by this time the *S. pratensis* had begun to recover well and the site was much more open. In early September an encouraging number of larval webs were found. 1982 started with a hard, cold winter which may well have been a factor in reducing the number of predators; the spring was the sunniest since 1955 and from late May there was a relatively large emergence. Indeed the summer of 1982 turned out to be the first of three successive good summers, and *aurinia* has since progressively increased in numbers. It will be interesting to see if the present hard winter will prove to be another beneficial factor.

Last year (1984), there was clear evidence of gravid females spreading into the surrounding countryside, and we are hopeful that the species may re-appear in other old haunts in the West Midlands which have escaped agricultural changes. However, if this happens, it may not be a process of natural extension. Several